

Commander's Comments

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Honolulu Engineer
District.
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By Lt. Col.
Ronald N. Light
HED Commander

District is key and vital component in Army Transformation

Many of you know that the 25th Infantry Division (Light) will undergo reorganization as part of the Army Transformation initiative. The Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), General Eric Shinseki (a native of Kauai) said this about Army Transformation: “If you don’t like change, you’re going to like irrelevance even less. The naysayers and those who say we are going too fast endanger the Army’s relevance to national security. It’s not a debate. The Army must change because the nation cannot afford to have an Army that is irrelevant.” I want to review what lies ahead for the Honolulu Engineer District as we support this effort.

The Commanding General of the 25th Infantry Division, Maj. Gen. James Dubik, has stated that Army Transformation is his number one priority. Insofar as the Division and U.S. Army Garrison, Hawaii represent our largest customer, accounting for more than \$645 million of our total program, Army Transformation is our number one priority as well.

First, a review of what “Army Transformation” means. The CSA, General Shinseki, sees the Army in three stages along the

road to transformation. First, today’s existing forces are seen as the “legacy force.” Much of the military construction we are doing today is in support of this legacy force. Our work includes new facility construction, real estate support, environmental support, and existing facility repair. While the “legacy force” structure will someday be transformed into a new, lighter force, most existing military facilities will remain. The US Army Hawaii will continue to rely on the District to support the sustainment, revitalization, and modernization of these facilities.

The second component of the Army’s transformation involves the development and fielding of an “interim force.” Hawaii is among five locations Army-wide to receive one of these “interim force” units, which we commonly refer to as the Interim Brigade Combat Team, or IBCT. Fort Lewis, Washington is on its way to fielding an IBCT; Alaska District will also receive an IBCT.

The District is heavily involved in laying the groundwork for an IBCT in Hawaii. Our Real Estate Division is engaged in land acquisition in support of the IBCT. Our Environmental Branches in Engineering and Construction Division and Programs and Project Management Division are supporting the effort with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental impact statements and other coordinating work, such as historic preservation and endangered species investigation. Meanwhile, others have begun design and scoping of some of the facilities needed for the IBCT. The total estimated program for IBCT is nearly \$700 million, and this work will almost double our current program.

There is some debate whether Hawaii is suitable for the IBCT. Our role to thoroughly conduct the NEPA/EIS process is critical, and so I ask each of you playing a part in this effort to complete the required NEPA work with excellence. The Army needs an IBCT in the Pacific: we must all work to ensure all issues are addressed to facilitate this.

Whether or not an IBCT comes to Hawaii, the 25th Infantry Division *will* undergo Army Transformation. At some point in the future, the Army will field what is termed the “objective force.” This force represents our future force, and the weapon systems and structure for it have yet to be completely defined. This “objective force” will probably mean even further work for the District, spread across fiscal year (FY) 07 and beyond.

A key piece of both the “objective force” and the “interim force” is the heavy reliance on communications. Accordingly, we must thoroughly coordinate our design and construction work with the Directorate of Information Management—the DOIM—here on Fort Shafter. This is a shared responsibility; we absolutely owe it to our customer, the 25th Infantry Division, to synchronize the information technology requirements needed to support a transformed Army.

This is an exciting time to be in the Honolulu Engineer District. We are a key and vital component of the Army Transformation team in Hawaii, and the commanding general of the 25th Infantry Division, Maj. Gen. Dubik, is counting on us. I ask each of you to join me in a full and unwavering commitment to do what ever it takes to support Army Transformation in Hawaii. This will be our legacy. Let’s plan it, and execute it, with distinction!

Smiles:

If you’re not using your smile, you’re like a man with a million dollars in the bank and no checkbook.—Les Giblin